



**US / NATO and
RUSSIA**
Women in Black say
**DIPLOMACY
NOT THREATS**

Today and tomorrow, 24 and 25 June... Ministers of Defence of NATO countries, including the UK's Michael Fallon, are meeting at NATO HQ in Brussels. *Among other things they are expected to discuss, and most likely affirm, the recent proposal of the US Government to "pre-position" its most advanced ground war machinery on Russia's very doorstep.*

US planned military encroachment on Russia... On 13 June the Pentagon announced its intention to permanently install heavy weaponry sufficient for 5900 fighting troops, in Eastern European countries and, most significantly, right up against the Russian border in the three Baltic states, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, formerly part of the USSR. If confirmed, this would represent, in the opinion of a former US supreme allied commander of NATO, the first such step since the end of the Cold War, and "a very meaningful shift in policy". It will break NATO's 1997 agreement with Russia not to station ground combat forces in countries that seceded from the former Soviet Union.

Russia's military posturing... A few days later, on 16 June, Vladimir Putin at the opening of a massive new military theme park, Patriot Park, near Moscow, announced his response to the US threat: he is acquiring 40 new intercontinental nuclear missiles "capable of overcoming even the most technically advanced missile defence systems". At the same event, Russia's deputy defence minister, Anatoly Antonov, blamed the West for "provoking an arms race" with Russia. The idea of Patriot Park, however, is to promote a militarist stance in the nation by drawing tens of thousands of visitors a day. Children will ride tanks, shoot guns and play extreme sports. "All males of all ages are defenders of the motherland and they must be ready for war, whether war comes or not," explained the man demonstrating a grenade-launcher.

Sabre-rattling instead of diplomacy... The West's drive to recruit Ukraine to NATO and the EU, and its support for the ousting of a pro-Russian president last year, are perceived by Russia as deeply threatening. In response Russia has annexed Crimea, and gives moral support (and many believe, despite denials, military assistance) to those of the country's Russian-speaking population that are fighting for separation. In turn, the USA has applied heavy economic sanctions, and NATO has carried out threatening air-force manoeuvres.

There has been a drastic failure of diplomacy on both sides.

For sources and more information see: < http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_room.htm>, < <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence>>, < <http://www.theguardian.com/uk>> and < <http://www.nytimes.com/>>

To: The Prime Minister, Rt.Hon.David Cameron, and Secretary of State for Defence, Rt.Hon.Michael Fallon.
I call on the UK Government to use its presence in NATO and other international forums to:

- reject the US plan to position heavy weaponry and troops in E.Europe, particularly in the Baltic States;
- argue against seeking to recruit Ukraine and Georgia to NATO membership;
- respect Russia's legitimate security sensitivities;
- use skilled and committed diplomacy to reduce tension between the Russian Federation and the US, UK and other NATO and European Union states.

Name:Signature.....

Address:

**Women in Black, 24 Colvestone Crescent, London E8 2LH Donations for leaflets etc most welcome.
www.london.womeninblack.org**

Women in Black holds vigils every Wednesday between 6-7 pm at the Edith Cavell Statue, opposite the door of the National Portrait Gallery, St.Martin's Place, London WC2. The vigils are silent, women-only and if possible wear black.